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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 16 October 2008, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Peralta (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Paraguay)

Contents

Agenda item 60: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*)

(a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*)

(b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 60: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/63/41)

(a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/63/160, 203 and 227)

(b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (*continued*) (A/63/308)

1. **Mr. El-Yas** (Iraq) said that current violence and the policies of the previous regime in his country had profoundly affected Iraqi children. The Government was working with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to provide free vaccinations for children, and had opened nurseries and care centres for disabled children. Social security for children had been extended to over 90,000 additional families, and over 40,000 disabled children were now covered.

2. The new Iraqi Constitution included provisions to protect children and outlawed sexual abuse. Articles 29 to 31 enshrined the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by ensuring that mothers, children and young persons enjoyed social and health security and were protected from economic exploitation and violence. The Government had further promoted children's rights by, inter alia, raising awareness of the danger of landmines, with support from UNICEF; providing financial support for orphans; preparing a draft law on child protection; ratifying both Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child; ensuring the availability of kindergartens and of free primary and secondary education; criminalizing begging and the use of child labour; and working to establish an Iraqi children's parliament.

3. Iraq was committed to cooperation with the United Nations on human rights and children's rights, and would take action on the recommendations of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, who had visited the country in April 2008. He was grateful to all Governments and non-governmental organizations that had assisted Iraq.

4. **Ms. Maierá** (Brazil) said that Brazil had participated in a four-year consultative process leading to the preparation of the draft United Nations guidelines for the appropriate use and conditions of alternative care for children. The guidelines would contribute to improving the condition of millions of children around the world living without parental care, and she looked forward to discussions with all interested parties at the tenth session of the Human Rights Council.

5. Brazil was honoured to convene the third World Congress against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, in cooperation with UNICEF, the international network End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT International) and the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The previous World Congress had consolidated worldwide partnerships and strengthened global commitment with the participation of many countries.

6. The third World Congress was intended to mobilize States to guarantee the rights of children and protect them against sexual exploitation. It would tackle new challenges and dimensions of sexual exploitation; identify advances and gaps in the legal framework and accountability mechanisms; promote holistic, intersectoral and inter-agency approaches; broaden partnerships; and define international cooperation strategies. She invited all Member States to participate in a fruitful exchange of experiences at the Congress and to develop holistic and rights-based strategies to combat sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.

7. **Ms. Challacombe** (United Kingdom) said that her country attached great importance to fulfilling its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to the Committee's concluding observations made following consideration of the United Kingdom periodic report. The United Kingdom was removing two reservations to the Convention relating to immigration and children in custody with adults. It would also ratify the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography by the end of 2008. Her Government had welcomed the involvement of NGOs in the interactive dialogue with the Committee on the Rights of the Child at its recent session and would like to see that practice continued in other treaty-monitoring bodies. The United Kingdom was considering the concluding observations and identifying potential areas for follow-up. Her country would continue to work domestically and internationally for the health and well-being of children and young people around the world.

8. In relation to the Committee's request for permission to meet in two parallel chambers on an exceptional basis to address the backlog in its workload, she asked what other solutions had been considered before resorting to such a measure.

9. Effective treaty-monitoring bodies were one of the best mechanisms to promote and protect human rights. Positive engagement by States parties with those bodies was essential for the integrity of the international system.

10. **Ms. Gendi** (Egypt) said that her country had established an ambitious cross-sectoral national strategy to take action as a follow-up to the document "A world fit for children", adopted at the special session. Egypt had allocated technical support to that end, and was promoting the document at the regional levels. The Government had succeeded in reducing child and maternal morbidity, had eliminated polio and childbirth tetanus, and, working with civil society, had greatly expanded education for girls. A successful campaign against female genital mutilation had also been conducted.

11. Egypt had helped to prepare, implement and disseminate the United Nations study on violence against children (see document A/61/299). It had withdrawn its reservations to certain articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, raised the marriageable age from 16 to 18, and raised the age of criminal responsibility from 7 to 12. Corporal punishment had been criminalized, a hotline established, and care provided for children born out of wedlock.

12. A Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children should be appointed without delay. Egypt was also concerned that the Committee on the Rights of the Child had requested permission to hold its fifty-third to fifty-sixth sessions, from October 2009 to January 2011, in parallel chambers. That arrangement would affect the equitable geographical distribution of the Committee as a whole, and hence its transparency, cultural diversity and comprehensive outlook. To clear the backlog of reports, a compromise solution would be to extend the length of sessions, despite any financial implications.

13. Lastly, Egypt welcomed the field visits of the Special Representative to the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to the occupied territories, Iraq and Afghanistan, and to Israeli prisons; it appreciated her objective findings on contentious issues, and looked forward to action by the Security Council and the General Assembly on the basis of her reports.

14. **Mr. Rachkov** (Belarus) said that the Secretary-General's reports on protecting the rights of children attested to the variety of results achieved in the key areas outlined at the special session on children. In areas where progress had been made (such as promoting healthy lives, providing quality education, protecting against abuse, exploitation and violence, and combating HIV/AIDS), there were often some aspects that had not been sufficiently addressed, such as shortage of vaccines and of qualified medical staff, and lack of access to safe drinking water and basic sanitary services.

15. His delegation agreed that failure to achieve the goals of the special session would undermine efforts towards realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The declining trend in child mortality was encouraging, yet Governments were failing to uphold the fundamental right to life of millions of newborn children every year.

16. Child and maternal mortality were gradually declining in Belarus, which had one of the highest immunization rates in the world for children aged under one year. United Nations agencies should give attention to countries falling behind in that area because of unsatisfactory medical services. The numbers of children infected with HIV/AIDS was also a cause of concern and attention should be given to filling funding gaps to combat that pandemic among children. Belarus had succeeded in reducing the percentage of underweight newborns to a level lower than in many European Union countries.

17. Belarus was committed to achieving the goals set at the special session concerning attendance at primary school and completion of primary schooling. According to UNICEF the country's young people aged between 15 and 24 years were literate.

18. Belarus welcomed the efforts of United Nations specialized agencies to protect children's rights and interests and supported the outcome of the 2008 review of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan. He hoped that the planned adjustments in priority areas under the strategic plan, including those reflecting comments made by Belarus, would contribute to the effectiveness of measures to protect children.

19. Belarus agreed that a greater sense of urgency was required from Governments if they were to achieve the goals of the special session on children. Greater commitments from the international community and broader and more focused partnerships would make it possible to move forward and to address the tasks set forth in the outcome document of the special session, entitled "A world fit for children".

20. **Mr. Davide** (Philippines) said that the Philippine Constitution included many provisions to ensure the well-being of children and defend their rights. Specific laws ensured the protection, growth and development of children and the Philippines also adhered strictly to the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant international instruments. The Department of Social Welfare and Development provided services for children and the Supreme Court had issued various rules to protect and promote their rights.

21. The Philippine Council for the Welfare of Children advocated children's rights and welfare, protected them from abuse and ensured that they received priority attention at all levels. Various activities were currently under way for the annual Philippine celebration of Children's Month in October.

22. His country had agreed to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), which aimed to protect children in armed conflict, and would receive a visit from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict in December 2008. Earlier in the year, the Philippines had presented its initial report under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on children in armed conflict. The Government would take into account the observations and suggestions of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and would upgrade its legislation and policy accordingly.

23. The MDGs and the agenda "A world fit for children" were top priorities for his Government. The Philippine midterm progress report on the MDGs reflected various achievements, including child-mortality and poverty reduction, nutrition, gender equality, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. The Philippines had committed to making further efforts in other areas such as access to early childhood care, primary education, maternal mortality and access to reproductive-health services.

24. The Philippines welcomed the adoption by consensus of the Declaration at the plenary meeting, yet there was still much more to be done to improve the lives of children everywhere. Genuine and continuing cooperation among all States was needed. Children were the hope of every nation.

25. **Ms. Zhang** Dan (China) said that, despite the steady progress made through national and international efforts in promoting and protecting the rights of children, numerous challenges remained. Greater efforts were therefore required in order to protect the rights of children and to eliminate the root causes of violations. Her Government called upon developed countries to share greater responsibilities and obligations by providing developing countries with the assistance needed for the healthy development of all children.

26. China's children made up one fifth of the world's child population. China had put in place a domestic legal and regulatory system for the protection of children's rights, which consisted of the Constitution, the Civil Code and laws on adoption, the protection of minors and compulsory education. At the operational level, the State Council's National Working Committee on Women and Children and relevant Government agencies had helped to shape a comprehensive nationwide system. Moreover, since 2001 the Outline for the Development of Children in China for 2001-2010 had been implemented nationwide. The Outline focused on health, education, legal protection and the environment in relation to children, and was part of China's action for the achievement of the MDGs and the objectives of the special session on children.

27. The Government had also adopted specific action plans to address difficult problems affecting children, such as the first national programme of action for combating trafficking in women and children (2008-2012). Special attention was also given to services for orphans, including AIDS orphans and disabled and homeless children, and measures to protect children, especially girls, from abuse, exploitation and violence.

28. China had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 and had since acceded to the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, the International Labour Organization Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour and

the Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption. In December 2007 it had ratified the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. In June 2007, her Government had enacted a law incorporating the relevant provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and guaranteeing the basic rights of minors to life, development, protection, participation and education. Her Government was also continuing its cooperation with UNICEF on follow-up to the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

29. The year 2008 was crucial for the implementation of "A world fit for children", the outcome document of the special session, and of the MDGs. The Declaration of the high-level meeting on follow-up to the special session had provided impetus for implementation of the outcome document. Her Government would continue its efforts to improve children's health, education and welfare and to enhance the relevant legislation. It would also increase assistance to the least developed countries in such areas as food, education and health care, and would work together with the international community to achieve the MDGs and to build a world fit for children.

30. **Ms. Jahan** (Bangladesh) said that Bangladesh had been one of the first States to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols, and was currently implementing the third national plan of action for children. Domestic legislation was being comprehensively reviewed to protect all children. The age of criminal responsibility had been raised. The 2006 Labour Law contained provisions to eliminate child labour. The clothing industry was now free from child labour, although the corporate sector needed to be more forthcoming. Considerable progress had been made on child health, including mass immunization and oral rehydration; the country was now on track to meet millennium development goal 1.

31. There was now complete gender parity in primary- and secondary-school enrolment. Cooperation between the Government, the private sector and non-governmental organizations had resulted in programmes for abandoned children, street children and those with disabilities.

32. Bangladesh welcomed the recruitment of a child-protection focal point in the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. As in previous years, Bangladesh would sponsor a General Assembly resolution on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010. Lastly, she stressed the importance of mobilizing international resources to bridge funding gaps.

33. **Mr. Motter** (Inter-Parliamentary Union) (IPU) said that one of the most fundamental rights of children was the right to good health from the moment of birth. Nearly all maternal and child deaths occurred in 68 countries in the world, of which only 16 were on track to achieve goal 4 on reducing child mortality. Despite some progress, change was disappointingly slow. Africa remained a particular focus of concern, since at least half of all maternal and child deaths took place in sub-Saharan Africa.

34. Growing attention was being paid to maternal health and child survival at all levels, in particular with regard to raising awareness and tracking change. As a result, it was now possible to identify the needs of each country and what measures should be taken to fulfil them. Change was possible, but it required political will and the translation of that will into action.

35. In 2008, IPU had joined forces with the partners of the Countdown to 2015 Conference on Maternal, Newborn and Child Survival with the aim of enhancing parliamentary efforts to promote maternal, newborn and child health in the 68 priority countries. At the 118th IPU Assembly and the Conference, both held in Cape Town in April 2008, parliamentarians from around the world had met with leading global health experts, policymakers and representatives of civil society and international organizations to accelerate progress towards goals 4 and 5. Participants had highlighted the importance of strengthening health policies and systems and ensuring a continuum of care. Those actions required the adoption of enabling legal frameworks, the allocation of sufficient funds and public-awareness-raising efforts, all of which were within the reach of parliamentarians.

36. Since then, IPU and Countdown partners had made efforts to support parliaments in overseeing Government action, budgeting for maternal, newborn and child health, advocating for the achievement of the MDGs, representing the voices of women and children, and legislating to ensure universal access to essential care. IPU would be closely following initiatives taken

by parliaments in that regard and highlighting them at its annual assemblies, starting with the 120th IPU Assembly in 2009.

37. **Mr. Dall'Oglio** (International Organization for Migration) said that the impact of migration of children had received less attention than had other migration issues. Statistics showed that in some countries as many as 50 per cent of young people had migrated. Since children left behind when their parents migrated were, of course, also affected by migration, the total number of children affected by migration became even more relevant. The International Organization for Migration had recently published a new study on international law and the protection of migrant children.

38. Children involved in migration could be placed broadly into three categories, namely: those who stayed behind in countries of origin, those travelling unaccompanied and those in the countries of destination. Data on children who stayed behind was particularly scarce. Further study was crucial to improving understanding of the impact of migration on the well-being of the children staying behind.

39. Children travelling alone were likely to be doing so irregularly, as the ability to travel legally without an adult was quite limited. Consequently, such children were at increased risk of exploitation, abuse and the worst forms of child labour. Current human-rights mechanisms might not be sufficient in such situations, and migrant children, particularly unaccompanied ones, might be better protected through the conclusion of bilateral and multilateral agreements based on existing human-rights norms.

40. Host countries should respect and protect the rights of migrant children, including their right to basic social services. Host countries should promote harmony and respect between migrants and the rest of society. Regularization of immigration status would facilitate the integration of migrant children into the communities of destination. Migrant children should enjoy the same rights as children with citizenship.

41. **Ms. Gastaldo** (International Labour Organization) (ILO) said that child labour had declined significantly in the past four years, dropping by nearly one third in certain age groups, with Latin America and the Caribbean registering the greatest progress. Nonetheless, even the most developed countries had some child labour, including its worst forms. ILO had adopted time-bound targets to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, and a large number of countries around the world had joined that process.

42. While poverty was usually at the root of child migration and child trafficking, it alone could not explain the magnitude of the phenomenon. A range of risk factors, when combined, rendered children vulnerable to migration and trafficking. A strong legal framework and Government commitments to addressing the issue were required for effective action.

43. Children must be in school and able to prepare for meaningful work. That could occur only when the factors causing child labour and preventing poor families from sending their children to school were addressed. Parents must have jobs that allowed families to enjoy a decent life and there must be social protection that enabled people to move out of poverty and crisis.

44. **Ms. Christensen** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) said that the situation of children living with HIV had worsened considerably in recent years. Many children were living in poverty, without medicines, education, information and other essentials. In Africa, with 80 per cent of the world's AIDS cases, 11 million children had been orphaned by AIDS.

45. Millions of Red Cross/Red Crescent volunteers were providing information about AIDS, breaking down stigma, confronting discrimination and advocating for treatment for those affected. In southern Africa, Red Cross societies were providing support to over 120,000 orphans and other children affected by AIDS and to guardians of children with AIDS. Access to antiretroviral treatment would be a major advocacy theme in 2009. Red Cross societies, working with a regional partner, were providing psychosocial support to children affected by AIDS in 13 countries.

46. Climate change also had health implications for children, as it could result in more cases of malaria and diarrhoea and affect the food supply and the availability of clean water. Those concerns were being addressed by local Red Cross/Red Crescent programmes around the world, in culturally appropriate ways. In the tiny island nation of Tuvalu, young people were learning to cope with natural disaster, such as rising sea levels, while in Colombia, puppet shows were being used to teach young people to identify natural threats and develop solutions.

47. **Mr. Zheglov** (Russian Federation) said that support for the institution of the family was central to improving the situation of children. In the Russian Federation, a project provided support for children in difficult situations and promoted adoption as a solution for children without parents. As part of the Year of the Child, proclaimed in the Russian Federation in 2008, family values, such as respect for elders and concern for the young and the less able-bodied, were being instilled in children and adolescents. Training was being provided in family-dispute prevention and resolution.

48. The Russian Federation had recently ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflicts. In the context of the suffering children endured in armed conflicts, it would be an oversight not to mention that during the attack on Southern Ossetia by the Saakashvili regime in August 2008, some 10,000 young people had been forced to leave their homes, while those who had been unable to leave had spent three days under Georgian fire. Children had been injured and killed, while others had lost parents and other relatives. Pregnant women who had taken shelter in basements and been without water, food or medical assistance had perished, as had newborn babies.

49. Georgian troops had targeted civilians, exploding homes, killing entire families and throwing grenades into basements where people were hiding. They had deliberately bombed a road used by escaping refugees, including children. They had fired on ambulances and had ignored requests to open up a humanitarian corridor. Residences, schools, day-care centres and hospitals had been fired upon and, in many cases, destroyed. Those cynical crimes against humanity must be firmly condemned by the international community and must not go unpunished.

50. **Ms. Štiglic** (Slovenia) urged the Secretary-General to complete the process of appointing a Special Representative on violence against children without further delay. Slovenia had committed itself to the full implementation of the outcome of the special session and the recommendations of the United Nations study on violence against children (see document A/62/209), particularly to preventing domestic violence and banning corporal punishment.

51. With the possible adoption of a new optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, there would remain only one core instrument without its own complaint mechanism, the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Committee on the Rights of the Child had expressed support for adding such a mechanism to the Convention, and her country looked forward to constructive debate.

52. A foundation called "Together", a Regional Centre for the Psychosocial Well-being of Children, had recently been established through the joint efforts of the Government of Slovenia, the city of Ljubljana and the non-governmental organization Slovene Philanthropy. It would specialize in assistance and rehabilitation for children affected by armed conflicts, post-war poverty and other negative social processes in the western Balkans, Iraq and the North Caucasus. Her country also hoped that the third World Congress against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, set for November 2008, would take a more holistic approach to the issue.

53. **Ms. Pérez Álvarez** (Cuba) said that despite progress made, for example the reduction of child-mortality rates by nearly 25 per cent, greater efforts must be made to meet international commitments, including Millennium Development Goal 4, on the reduction of child mortality by two thirds by 2015. According to data from 2006, nearly 10 million children under five died every year; in sub-Saharan Africa alone more than 2,000 children died every day from malaria, fever and anaemia, the effects of which continued to hinder the development of survivors.

54. The current food crisis aggravated the situation of children who lived in poverty, did not have enough to eat or were marginalized. More than 200 million children in the world worked, more than 100 million of them in mines and agriculture. Thousands of children were physically impaired by their situation or exposed to sexual exploitation or abuse. Anti-migrant policies, including in the European Union and in the United States, violated the rights of migrants and their families.

55. Her Government, despite the serious economic consequences of more than 40 years of economic blockade by the United States had implemented numerous policies to promote the rights of children. For example, thanks to free health care, Cuba had one

of the lowest child-mortality rates, 5.3 per 1,000 live births, in the world. The progress made in the area of children's rights was directly attributable to the political will of her Government and the efforts of the Cuban people, who were determined to assert their independence and defend their sovereignty in the face of United States policies, whatever the cost. The recent hurricanes, the most destructive in 50 years, had increased support at the international level and even within certain sectors of the United States, for the termination of the illegal and inhumane blockade.

56. Children should not be denied a prosperous future, health, education, food and healthy recreational activities. Every effort must therefore be made to protect girl and boy children from sexual exploitation, child labour, trafficking, armed conflict and drug use and to halt the degradation of the environment that likewise affected their health. At a time when children around the world suffered hunger, neglect, murder, foreign occupation and poverty, when a relative handful in the world were growing richer while most, especially in the South, were increasingly poor, the international community, in a spirit of human solidarity, must act to meet the needs of the world's children. Their future and the future of the world depended on it.

57. **Mr. Muita** (Kenya) said that gains had been made in children's health, including increased use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets in sub-Saharan Africa and greater immunization coverage. Child mortality was declining around the world and school enrolment was at an all-time high. However, challenges such as armed conflict, malnutrition and child labour remained.

58. Kenya had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols and had brought its national law into conformity with the Convention. A family court had been established to promote the legal protection of the family as the custodian of the rights of children.

59. Kenya had introduced universal primary education in 2003, and primary-school enrolment was steadily increasing. Gender parity in primary-school access had almost been achieved, except among girls in arid and semi-arid regions. With measures to expand secondary-school infrastructure, coupled with free tuition, transition rates from primary to secondary school had improved significantly. Nonetheless, there was a shortage of teachers, and the nomadic lifestyle of pastoralist communities in arid and semi-arid areas made it difficult to retain enrolled children in school. HIV/AIDS had had an impact on the lives of both teachers and children, resulting in high numbers of orphans. A national framework to improve the plight of orphans and vulnerable children had been adopted, and an allocation targeting 30,000 households had been provided.

60. In the area of child health, immunization coverage was increasing significantly in Kenya, and major gains had been made in the fight against malaria, the number one killer of children under the age of five in the country. To combat violence against children, a toll-free around-the-clock child hotline had been established. Over 50,000 calls had been received between May and August 2008, creating a large demand in terms of response and referrals. A national child-protection system was being developed, which would provide guidelines to professionals and the public on how to help children needing assistance.

61. **Mr. Hannesson** (Iceland) said it was regrettable that the appointment of a Special Representative on violence against children was still pending. Although the eleventh report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (A/63/227) showed some progress, much more needed to be done for the protection of children in situations of armed conflict. The range of violations and abuses committed against children in such situations went beyond the categories set out in Security Council resolution 1612 (2005). Regarding acts of sexual violence, Iceland called for the implementation of key provisions relating to children and armed conflict set forth in Security Council resolution 1820 (2008).

62. Human-rights-monitoring capacities within peacekeeping operations and country missions should be strengthened, and the Office of the Special Representative should work more closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Iceland was firmly committed to the full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols.

63. **Mr. Emadi** (Iran) said that it was important to address the serious effect of recent conflicts, including those in the occupied Palestinian territories, especially for children. Children must be protected from the threats created by sanctions, occupation, poverty, racism, discrimination, injustice and unilateral coercive

measures. Improvements must be made to guarantee access for minors to safe water, sanitation facilities, immunization, food and education. The subject of children's rights should be included in training curricula, codes of conduct and educational curricula at all levels.

64. The Human Rights Centre of the Islamic Republic of Iran was working to create a favourable environment for children to develop, in accordance with Islamic sharia and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Many court decisions had greatly contributed to developing national laws and policies in the area of family law, giving children better legal protection from violence and developing juvenile-justice standards. The courts had started referring to the Convention when interpreting domestic laws. The "Voice of Family" radio provided a meeting point for parents and children to share their experiences.

65. The UNICEF office in Iran had begun to seek the support and collaboration of religious leaders and scholars in combating violence against children. Given the well-established tradition of Islamic concern for children, there was ample room for a practical partnership between UNICEF and religious leaders in such areas as basic research on children's rights and Islam, raising awareness of children's rights, advocacy for legal standards to guarantee children's rights, and advancement of child-friendly behaviour in society.

66. **Ms. Abdelhak** (Algeria) said that matters pertaining to the rights of the child were coordinated by the Ministry of Family and Women's Affairs. Children's health had been improved, and infant mortality had been reduced, thanks to the improvements made in health infrastructure throughout the country. Special efforts were made to protect women and children and to promoting family welfare. Abandoned children were placed in families, thanks to the *kafala* system of foster care. Education was free and compulsory, and there was no discrimination between boys and girls. Educational programmes went hand-in-hand with social programmes, such as the school allowance to help poor families meet back-to-school costs, school lunches and free transportation in remote areas. Other types of training, including distance-learning programmes, were also provided.

67. The national consultative committee on the promotion and protection of human rights and its subcommittee on education and the rights of the child conducted periodic evaluations of the implementation of the Convention. The principles and provisions of the Convention were disseminated through school programmes. Corporal punishment was prohibited, and a national strategy to fight violence against children was in place. The Ministry of Family and Women's Affairs was making every effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the objectives of the Declaration adopted at the special session.

68. **Mr. Bui The Giang** (Viet Nam) said that his country had persisted in placing child protection, care and education at the heart of its national development strategies. Viet Nam had been the first country in Asia and the second in the world to accede to the Convention. It had worked strenuously to implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and was currently preparing its latest report to the Committee.

69. In order to implement the Convention, Viet Nam was gradually incorporating its provisions into various domestic laws such as the labour law, the law on military service and others relating to the rights of children. It was also integrating child protection, care and education into socio-economic development programmes and had elaborated a plan of action for children for the period up to 2010, with a focus on improving health and education for children, in particular the disadvantaged. It was taking a number of steps to monitor the implementation of children's rights. It was tapping all the available sources of funding, including the Government, local communities and individuals, as well as bilateral and multilateral foreign assistance. It was also enhancing international cooperation by acceding to and implementing relevant international instruments and making efforts to raise public awareness of the rights of the child.

70. Its efforts had yielded tangible progress, notably in health care and education. Over 90 per cent of children under six had access to free medical care, and mortality rates for children aged both under five years and under one year had declined. Viet Nam had been chosen by the World Health Organization to take part in the upcoming launch of a report on child-injury prevention. The scope and quality of the nationwide education system had been enhanced and almost 100 per cent of six-year-olds were enrolled in primary school. The overall enrolment rate was 97.5 per cent for primary education and 85 per cent for secondary education. Children belonging to ethnic minorities had

greater access to education and social benefits on the basis of a new needs-based approach. The Government planned to ensure social care by 2010 for 90 per cent of children living in special circumstances, such as orphans and children with disabilities, and people who had been affected as children by the use of Agent Orange during the Viet Nam War.

71. The second half of the five-year plan for 2006-2010 would focus on transnational organized crime, cross-border trafficking in women and children, prostitution, drug trafficking and abuse, and the spread of HIV/AIDS, as well as on improving infrastructure and management capacity and reducing discrepancies in development levels among different regions of the country. To that end, international cooperation needed to be improved. He was grateful for the assistance received over the years from the international community, including the United Nations system, for projects aimed at helping children in disadvantaged groups. He hoped that such assistance would continue to be provided.

72. **Ms. Abubakar** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that her country had established maternity centres, nurseries and kindergartens in every city. The Supreme Council for Children and the Directorate of Childcare at the Ministry of Social Affairs were responsible for policy design on children's issues.

73. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to both Optional Protocols. It was firmly committed to all relevant international resolutions and initiatives. Yet despite the widespread international support for the Convention and its Optional Protocols, blatant violations continued to occur. Children continued to be exploited as child soldiers, sexually abused, and forced to migrate. Her country therefore called upon the international community to ensure that those children could return to their homes and families.

74. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya welcomed the recommendations of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict and the field visits of the Special Representative to the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) could act as a deterrent by ensuring that perpetrators faced punishment. Her delegation condemned all instances of child labour and police brutality against children, and deplored the situation of street children.

75. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya was concerned about the plight of children under foreign occupation, particularly in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Children there faced violence and repression; some were detained in inhumane conditions in Israeli prisons.

76. **Ms. Sapag** (Chile) said that, in September 2008, President Bachelet had launched a regional campaign, coordinated by the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, that would create a platform for cooperation in order to eradicate maternal and infant mortality in Latin America.

77. Chile attached special importance to the reintegration of children in accordance with the Paris Principles, as mentioned in the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (A/63/227, para. 47). Chile had endorsed the Paris Principles, which supplemented the Cape Town principles. The Special Representative had helped improve the situation of children in armed conflict, and her mandate should be renewed. Chile also supported the appointment of a Special Representative on violence against children. Her delegation welcomed the recent decision of the UNICEF Executive Board to maintain contributions from regular resources for middle-income countries, thereby enabling Chile to continue receiving UNICEF support.

78. Chile had submitted its initial reports on the Optional Protocols to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and the Government had referred the Committee's recommendations to the relevant national entities. Chile endorsed the request to the General Assembly to approve the functioning of the Committee in parallel chambers between October 2009 and January 2011 as a temporary measure, on the understanding that the original intention had been for the Committee to meet in plenary sessions. She announced that Chile had nominated Ms. Marta Mauras for appointment to the Committee for the 2009-2013 term.

79. **Mr. Mansour** (Tunisia) called on the international community to work together to ensure the implementation at the national, regional and international levels of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on follow-up to the special session (A/63/308) and in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

(UNESCO) report on "The state of the world's children, 2008: child survival". Action was all the more urgent in the light of such challenges as degradation of the environment, the current food and financial crises and the prevalence of poverty and illness.

80. The ratification by Tunisia of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 and the implementation of the Child Protection Code in 1995 testified to his Government's ongoing commitment to developing its human resources in a country where a large proportion of the population were young people. Additional measures to promote the rights of children included the Presidential Prize for Children's Rights; the celebration of National Children's Day; the establishment of a body to guarantee the rights of children in difficulty; the establishment of the Children's Parliament; and the Second National Plan for Children 2002-2010.

81. Recalling General Assembly resolution 62/139, he said that his Government had established a centre for autistic children to increase awareness of that condition and provide medical care for affected children and training for parents, specialists, educators and stakeholder organizations. In order to provide an enabling environment for all children to prosper, measures had been adopted in the areas of health, education, training, employment and insertion into society with a view to ensuring children achieved their full potential.

82. In the firm belief that children offered not problems but solutions, his Government had declared 2008 the Year for Comprehensive Dialogue with Youth; consultations held throughout the country had led to the drafting of a Pact for Tunisian Youth, to be proclaimed in November 2008, which set out the vision of Tunisian youth for building a better future through, for example, participation in public life, the use of new technologies, volunteerism and mutual assistance.

83. The Pact gave special prominence to participation in public and associative activities, which reflected young people's awareness of future challenges including availability of employment, integration into a knowledge-based society and the need to adapt to modern times. It also reaffirmed young people's commitment to meeting those challenges and to continued dialogue in a climate of free exchange of ideas and democracy. The drafting of the Pact confirmed the special role of young Tunisians as citizens of a modern democracy.

84. **Ms. Aqsa** (Pakistan) welcomed progress made in meeting the needs of children but said that Governments and the international community must give greater urgency to those efforts, because investing in children was investing in the future. The rights of the child were too often neglected; crimes against children were still rampant in various parts of the world, imposing an extraordinary social, moral and economic burden on society, the effects of which became visible in the long run, as children entered adulthood ill-prepared and unskilled. The rights of children could not, therefore, be isolated from development issues and poverty. yet, while some progress had been made in meeting children's needs in such areas as health, education, nutrition and shelter, many challenges, including persistent inequality, injustice, poverty and discrimination, remained.

85. The outcomes of the World Summit for Children and the special session were concrete examples of the world's commitment to children. Pakistan had played a leading role in the preparation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and had been one of the first States to ratify it. Pakistan was also a party to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution.

86. Her Government had adopted a number of additional measures: in cooperation with UNICEF, a National Commission for Child Welfare and Development had been established; corporal punishment had been banned in schools; a separate juvenile-justice system had been established; a National Child Policy and Plan of Action was being drafted; a Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Ordinance had been adopted in 2002, and efforts were being made to repatriate and rehabilitate children smuggled abroad for commercial exploitation. The National Plan of Action on Education for All, which aimed to achieve universal primary-level enrolment by 2015, was currently under way, and national literacy promotion efforts placed special emphasis on girls. The Child Protection Bill, currently before the Parliament, would enact provisions on minimum age for marriage, sexual abuse, trafficking in children, child labour and children's rights in general. The media and civil society likewise played an important role in increasing awareness of children's issues and of the need to improve legal and administrative structures.

87. At a time of unprecedented global prosperity, she called on Governments and the international community to allocate sufficient resources and attention to defending children's rights worldwide. The quality and prosperity of tomorrow's societies depended on that commitment.

88. **Mr. Vigny** (Switzerland) said his country was actively involved in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and expressed support for the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and of UNICEF. He commended the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict for her report (A/63/227) and called for continued efforts to protect children in situations of armed conflict. It was particularly important for the international community to strengthen the application of international standards and ensure that those responsible for grave violations of children's rights were held to account, and to broaden the scope of application of the monitoring and reporting mechanism to include all types of grave violations, particularly sexual violence. The monitoring and reporting mechanism should likewise be strengthened, perhaps by deploying child-protection officers with peacekeeping missions. All stakeholders must strengthen their cooperation to protect children.

89. His Government had ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and had subsequently adopted measures to improve implementation at the national level. He stressed the need for the international community to prevent the abuse of children by addressing the root causes of situations that made children vulnerable to sexual exploitation. He therefore looked forward to the Third World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children with a view to strengthening international cooperation in that regard.

90. Turning to the issue of the rights of detainees worldwide, he expressed concern at the situation of their children, whose well-being and social stability were affected when parents were detained. Given the forthcoming twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, he called for increased attention to the rights of all categories of children, including the children of detainees.

91. He said that his delegation would have liked to participate in the negotiations on the draft resolution on the rights of the child sponsored by the Latin American and Caribbean Group and the European Union. He deeply regretted that the day before the introduction of the draft resolution, the negotiating process undertaken by the sponsors was still not clear to many delegations, including his own.

92. **Ms. Sow** (Senegal) said that her Government had acted to implement the final document of the special session by including children's issues in national and regional policies and regularly increasing funding. Her Government's poverty-reduction strategy included measures to protect children at risk, for example in the areas of child labour, violence against women and birth registration. A comprehensive policy for young children's development targeted children up to the age of six. A 10-year youth-promotion programme had been launched as well as a 10-year education and training programme to achieve education for all by 2010. The nutrition-improvement programme was intended to eliminate deficiencies in iodine and vitamin A and ensure access to quality food.

93. Senegalese children played an active role in formulating policies which concerned them. They had contributed to the preparation of the NGO supplementary report submitted during consideration by the Committee on the Rights of the Child of the periodic report of Senegal in 2006 and had participated in the preparation of the report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children (A/61/299). Children of both sexes had participated freely in children's parliaments at the departmental, regional and national levels.

94. Her Government's efforts to promote a world fit for children had led to increased public awareness of and a real commitment to children's rights. Although challenges remained, her Government was committed to further progress towards implementation of the Plan of Action set out in the document entitled "A world fit for children" by the end of the decade.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.